

## Secondary Traumatic Stress Core Competencies in Trauma-Informed Supervision Self-Rating Tool

**Competency #1:** Knowledge of the signs, symptoms, and risk factors of STS and its impact on employees; Knowledge of agency support options, referral process for employee assistance, or external support resources for supervisees who are experiencing symptoms of STS.

The Supervisor is able to do the following:

Competency	Self-Rating		
Recognize the signs of STS in their supervisees	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Address observed STS with symptomatic employees in a supportive manner that normalizes their responses, promotes resiliency, and is supportive of the supervisee and does not pathologize, demean, or threaten the supervisee	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Delineate what the STS-informed services and support options are available from the organization	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Facilitate the referral process for accessing available, quality services for symptomatic employees	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Identify other resources that provide STS prevention or intervention services and is able to assist the employee into accessing those resources	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Encourage the consistent use of organizational supports for the mitigation/ prevention of STS symptoms as a normalized part of doing this work	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Act as an advocate within the organization for STS supports, training, or other needed adjustments needed by supervisees indicated by supervisory monitoring of STS symptoms in supervisees	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Differentiate STS, PTSD, and burnout symptoms, and describe the differential varying responses to each condition	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Identify how race, historical trauma, implicit bias, and/or culture impacts the way STS manifests at the individual and organizational levels	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area

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**Competency #2:** Knowledge and capacity to self-assess, monitor, and address the supervisor’s personal STS.

The Supervisor is able to do the following:

Competency	Self-Rating		
Recognize the effect of race, historical trauma, implicit bias, culture and/or other trauma exposure upon themselves him/herself and describe how it may manifest in the supervisory process	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Self-assess for signs and symptoms of secondary traumatic stress that is affecting their/his/her own functioning on a regular basis	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Define a plan for regular reflection to identify and self-assess secondary traumatic stress	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Address secondary traumatic stress signs and symptoms of STS when they arise in their own lives	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Willingly seek support from peers or own supervisor	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area

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**Competency #3:** Knowledge of how to encourage employees in sharing the emotional experience of doing trauma work in a safe and supportive manner.

The Supervisor is able to do the following:

Competency	Self-Rating		
Employ skills to enhance psychological safety of supervisees during supervision	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Describe common emotional responses to trauma work	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Skillfully employ reflective listening as part of supervisory practice	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Identify and utilize supervisees' strengths in order to use data to increase supervisee self-awareness, competence, and resilience	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Describe common emotional responses to trauma work and integrate these into discussions with supervisees	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Normalize common emotional responses to trauma work during supervision	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Provide emotional support to supervisees, and how to determine what method may be most helpful to supervisees	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area

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**Competency #4:** Knowledge of skills to assist the employee in emotional re-regulation after difficult encounters; capacity to assess the effectiveness of intervention, monitor progress and make appropriate referrals, if necessary.

The Supervisor is able to do the following:

Competency	Self-Rating		
<b><i>Educate supervisees</i></b>			
Define self-regulation	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Teach self-regulation skills	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Normalize emotional responses to difficult situations	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
<b><i>Assess supervisees</i></b>			
Evaluate the immediate current well-being of the supervisee	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Identify negative self-appraisals, cognitive distortions and ineffective coping behaviors that the supervisee may be demonstrating	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Observe—continuously and over time—the emotional response of the supervisee over time to assess recovery and the potential need for added supports or referrals	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
<b><i>Coach and support supervisees</i></b>			
Assist with self-regulation, including cognitive skills (e.g., thinking about a situation differently), and behavioral recovery (e.g., distraction, self-soothing, and physical relaxation and redirection of energy)	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Communicate concern and support	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Support the supervisee toward the development of skills for managing intense affect, and to prompt supervisees to utilize these strategies when needed	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Provide concrete suggestions regarding emotional regulation strategies, and emphasizes their importance by allowing supervisees the time needed to implement their chosen strategies	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area

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**Competency #5:** Knowledge of basic Psychological First Aid (PFA) or other supportive approaches to assist staff after an emergency or crisis event.

The Supervisor is able to do the following:

Competency	Self-Rating		
Assure the psychological, physical, and emotional safety of staff following an emergency or crisis event incident, including a discussion of physical and psychological and emotional safety	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Know the eight Core Actions of PFA approach	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Recognize the different ways staff may respond to an emergency or crisis event	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Invite questions from staff in a manner that supports individuals' need for emotional safety and by respecting individuals' choice to share or not share as they see fit	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Provide accurate information regarding secondary traumatic stress, signs to self-monitor the signs and symptoms, and strategies to enhance coping	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Inquire about the immediate needs of staff following an event	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Assist supervisees in the development of an action plan to address identified needs	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Facilitate access to up-to-date information regarding on resources available to staff who have experienced direct/indirect trauma exposure, including EAP information, insurance empaneled providers, and specific recommendations related to referral sources familiar with secondary traumatic stress	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area

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**Competency #6:** Ability to both model and coach supervisees in using a trauma lens to guide case conceptualization and service delivery

The Supervisor is able to do the following:

Competency	Self-Rating		
Educate supervisees regarding how trauma may alter functioning of a trauma-exposed client	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Assure that the supervisee has formulated the role of trauma in the clinical presentation	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Redirect the supervisee from focusing on what is wrong with a trauma-exposed client (i.e., diagnosis and symptoms) to what happened in the client's life (i.e., consideration of how behaviors/symptoms may make sense when the client's trauma exposure is assessed)	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Guide supervisees to a recognition of a client's trauma history and symptoms in a way that explains what the client may be experiencing and serves to guide service delivery	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Redirect supervisees when they drift into attitudes/beliefs about clients that are inconsistent with the trauma-focused "lens"	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Educate supervisees about key trauma concepts, support them in incorporating these concepts into a trauma-informed case formulation, and in guiding the supervisee when they drift into an approach inconsistent with the trauma lens	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Promote fidelity to trauma-responsive, and evidence-supported/based models in daily practice	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Encourage supervisee to bring forth multiple perspectives of the presenting problem(s), priorities, focus, and goals of treatment by encouraging supervisee's active engagement of the client, the client's significant others/family, and extended supports in the assessment, intervention planning, and ongoing service delivery process	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area

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**Competency #7:** Knowledge of resiliency factors and ability to structure resilience-building into individual and group supervisory activities.

The Supervisor is able to do the following:

Competency	Self-Rating		
Facilitate the supervisee’s experience of a developing sense of mastery of the management of trauma-related issues with clients	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Identify and develop supervisee’s strengths and help supervisee him or her apply those strengths to job-related activities	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Connect the individual to his or her team to guard against isolation and to develop a sense of shared ownership of difficult circumstances	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
<b><i>Support the development of compassion satisfaction in the supervisee via the following:</i></b>			
Assisting with the analysis of supervisee perceptions regarding complex case situations, and to supporting acceptance of situations that cannot be changed	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Assisting the supervisee to reframe situations to allow for the recognition of partial successes	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Assisting the supervisee to adopt a positive view of him or herself and their skill level	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Encouraging the supervisee to notice, acknowledge, and savor positive moments with clients	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Reinforcing the benefits of engaging in pleasurable activities at work and off hours	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area

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**Competency #8:** Ability to distinguish between expected changes in supervisee perspectives and cognitive distortions related to indirect trauma exposure.

The Supervisor is able to do the following:

Competency	Self-Rating		
Recognize when changes in a supervisee's perspectives occur	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Successfully engage supervisee in discussion of observed changes and obtain supervisee's his or her perspectives thoughts regarding these changed views	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Normalize that changes in worldview (e.g., bad things do happen to innocent children) that will naturally occur during trauma work	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Assist supervisee by challenging unhelpful cognitive distortions about self, work, or the world; (e.g., thinking "This is useless", "The world is unsafe", "I'm the only one", or displaying hypervigilance)	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Provide support towards replacing cognitive distortions with more accurate assessments	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area

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**Competency #9:** Ability to use appropriate self-disclosure in supervisory sessions to enhance the supervisees' ability to recognize, acknowledge, and respond to the impact of indirect trauma.

The Supervisor is able to do the following:

Competency	Self-Rating		
Normalize STS responses through timely use of self-disclosure related to his or her own experiences dealing with trauma work	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Employ self-disclosure as a tool to help supervisees recognize, acknowledge, and respond to the impact of indirect trauma	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Willingly disclose when asked directly by a supervisee, thereby avoiding a posture of withholding, and facilitating emotional relatedness and equality in the relationship	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area
Monitor his or her own motivation and intentions as a critical factor in weighing the ethical force of self-disclosure, particularly whether the goal of such disclosure is primarily for the supervisee's benefit	Not part of my skill set yet	Doing OK but need more training	I have confidence in my skills in this area